

Testimony

Leslie A. Hotaling, Director
Department of Public Works
Government of the District of Columbia

Fiscal Year 2003 Budget Oversight Hearing March 22, 2002

Good morning Madam Chairperson, members of the Council and staff, I am Leslie Hotaling, Director of the Department of Public Works. I will be providing testimony today on DPW's FY 2003 budget request. I am joined by Pamela Graham, Chief Financial Officer for the Department. I would also like to acknowledge other members of my senior staff, Tom Henderson, Solid Waste Management Administrator; Gwen Mitchell, Parking Services Administrator; James Roberts, Deputy Administrator for Administrative Services; Michael Belak, our Chief Technology Officer; and Ron Flowers, Fleet Management Administrator.

THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

The Department of Public Works (DPW) was once a bulky amalgam of organizations with disparate goals and uneven management. It was an agency whose services overall were sinking because of years of fiscal deficiency.

Mayor Williams and this Council have righted that wrong. At the mid-point of FY 2002, DPW is a newly streamlined, tightly run agency that has worked hard to climb out of that deep hole, rebuild its infrastructure and get back to the business of serving the city.

We are comprised of three major operational units, the Solid Waste Management Administration, the Parking Services Administration, and the Fleet Management Administration. They are supported in their daily work by a team focused on agency management, including the Office of the Director, as well as the Offices of the Chief Financial Officer, Administrative Services and Information and Technology.

The Department of Public Works provides the basic services that residents expect from their local government. In fact, in recent newspaper articles talking about the overall progress made by the Williams Administration, it is the improved services at DPW that often top the list. We are very proud of this.

Together, we are working around the clock to keep our city – our neighborhoods and thoroughfares – clean, safe and attractive through steadily improving trash and recycling collection, strategically deployed street and alley cleaning resources, effective solid waste disposal, increased parking enforcement, and improved fleet management programs. Operationally, our goal is delivering neighborhood-based, on-time, scheduled services to the residents of the District. Our mission is to provide sanitation, parking enforcement, fleet maintenance, and energy related services to District residents, visitors, and business to ensure safe, clean and aesthetic neighborhoods and public spaces.

We want to be the Department of Public Works in the cleanest city in the world!

OPERATING BUDGET FY2002/BUDGET REQUEST FY2003

The 2003 budget book looks a little different than those submitted in years past. DPW is in the middle of two interesting dynamics. First, we are adopting Performance Based Budgeting, which when fully implemented, will give us all a clearer picture of our operational needs by tying budgets to activities and, ultimately, to service delivery outcomes. And second, we are transitioning to a separate Department of Transportation

I am happy to report that while we have had spending pressures in the current fiscal year, we have worked very closely with the central Office of Budget and Planning to address and resolve these pressures.

At the mid-point in our fiscal year, we feel confident that we will be able to implement the programmatic goals we laid out for this committee in our previous FY 2002 oversight hearing. In essence, there are no dramatic programmatic shifts in DPW's FY 03 budget. We are staying the course. In the past few years we have built the foundation for a strong Department of Public Works. Now we will flex our muscles.

The proposed FY 2003 operating budget for DPW is \$100,988,215. This includes \$82, 498,211 from local funds, supporting 1061 FTE positions, and \$18, 490,004 from other sources, supporting 179 FTE positions. The proposed capital budget is \$2.2 million for facility renovations.

We believe that the funding provided for in the FY 2003 budget will afford us the opportunity to sustain many of the operational improvements made possible by the

Mayor and this Council. It will put this department in a position to deliver a high return on investment.

The Department has developed several strategic goals toward which all energies will be focused. While they are detailed in the budget book by program area, I would like to highlight a few of those for here.

Primary Strategic Goals

- Achieve a rating of Clean or Moderately Clean for 85% of the District's gateway corridors, high-visibility commercial areas, residential and industrial zones

- Deliver scheduled services in a timely manner

- Contribute to the citywide environmental agenda

- Increase multi-lingual personnel by 10% each year

- Establish training and incentive programs to attract and retain skilled workforce

- Ensure daily availability of mission-critical equipment for core services

- Enforce preventive maintenance schedules for DPW's vehicles

- Maintain industry standard equipment replacement schedules

- Develop integrated information systems to support our business operations

- Operate in attractive and safe facilities so that the department can deliver services efficiently

SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT ADMINISTRATION

The first operations unit I would like to discuss is sanitation services. This program is partitioned into four linked activities – solid waste collections and disposal, public space cleaning, and sanitation regulations enforcement.

Trash Collection

Probably our most visible service is residential trash collection. Each week, DPW's trash collection crews successfully complete over 140,000 service stops. In the past two years, we have made enormous service strides. We replaced our entire trash packer fleet. We implemented new work management and quality assurance systems that track productivity and costs by route. We replaced Supercans citywide. We also upgraded working conditions for our crews. The benefit of these innovations is clear: DPW collected over 123,000 tons of municipal trash and improved same day service delivery from 98% during FY2000 to 99.4% in FY2001. In 2002, we expect to nudge our on-time collection rate up to 99.8 percent. In 2003, we will focus on the quality of our work.

Recycling

Our recycling program is due for a growth spurt. In FY 2001, over 20,800 tons of paper, glass, metal and plastics were recycled through the residential collection program, with all but 5.3% of the materials sold at market. This represents approximately 15% of our municipal waste stream. We know we can do better.

As I have previously reported to this committee, in 2001 DPW hired two contract monitors whose sole responsibility is to ensure that District residents receive the service they pay for from our recycling contractor. In FY 2002, we also hired three commercial recycling inspectors who will provide outreach to our multifamily dwellings and the business community about their responsibilities to recycle.

By 2003, we anticipate sustaining a full-fledged recycling program with our complement of contract monitors, commercial recycling investigators, and education specialists to help us relaunch the SWEEP Jr. program in DC schools.

New public education brochures have been produced in English and Spanish detailing how residential curbside recycling should be sorted, packaged and set out, and we are working with the Office of Property Management to ensure an effective recycling program in our government buildings. However, as part of the agency's target savings reductions, we are forced to reduce the recycling contract by \$810,000. This savings will not translate into a service reduction. Rather, weekly collections will continue, with all points of collection at curbside.

Also in the works for later this year into FY 2003, DPW and its union partners are exploring the feasibility of **contracting-in** at least part of the residential recycling program. A pilot route should be underway by early fall using 32-gallon minicans to make it easier for residents to store recycling for collection.

Bulk Collection

Bulk trash collection, our appointment-only service for large, unwieldy items, continues to be a success. Residential customers are able to schedule an appointment for bulk trash removal simply by calling the Citywide Call Center. We have met those appointments nearly 100 percent of the time, collecting over 4000 tons of bulk waste each year. In addition, except for two months when we were having technical problems with our scheduling interface with the Citywide Call Center, 97% of bulk trash appointments are made within 10 days of the service request, far exceeding our target of 80 percent and improving our performance from FY 01.

In FY03 we will continue to provide the bulk collection service we are known for. Why mess with success?

Solid Waste Education and Enforcement Program (SWEEP)

The primary function of the SWEEP inspector is to change the behavior of those who have not learned to do their part in keeping the District clean. As of next Monday, we will have 22 inspectors deployed throughout the city. By the end of the fiscal year, we expect to hire an additional five lead inspectors.

Inspectors usually work alone and are assigned by ward (2 to 3 per ward).

SWEEP maximizes its effectiveness by regularly deploying inspectors to areas with the greatest need. This High Impact Visible Enforcement strategy, known as HIVEs, places a contingent of SWEEP inspectors in selected persistent problem areas of the city for several days, where they concentrate their collective efforts on resolving long-standing problems and identifying ways to sustain the improvements once they've moved on. .

In FY 2003, the program will focus its resources on persistent problem areas, while also expanding its reach to address quality of life violations such as littering and improving our partnerships with DCRA, DOH and MPD through the Neighborhood Services Core Teams.

Street and Alley Cleaning

The Street and Alley Cleaning Division provides services 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. During the day, we are sweeping residential neighborhoods and high visibility commercial areas. At night, we are collecting trash from the city's nearly 3000 sidewalk litter cans as well as sweeping the downtown core.

The ultimate performance measure for DPW is the "cleanliness rating" assigned to city streets by the Clean City survey teams. This data is collected quarterly and

helps us direct our resources to meet changing needs throughout the city. By the 2nd Quarter of FY2002, DPW had outstripped its goal achieving a cleanliness rating of “clean” or “moderately clean” on 82% on gateways, commercial and residential areas.

I am happy to report that we can sustain our street and alley services in 2003; unfortunately we cannot expand our programs as we had hoped. As part of DPW’s contribution to the citywide savings initiatives, we will not implement a planned expansion of night sweeping in the outer core next year, which may impact the cleanliness rating for those residential arterials. (\$264, 855/6 FTEs) (South Capitol St, Southern Ave., MLK, South Dakota Ave., Michigan Ave.).

However, to help further the reach of our street and alley cleaning work, DPW has forged innovative partnerships with the Office of Corporation Counsel (OCC), the Department of Employment Services’ (DOES’ ARISE Program -Adults Rising Into Sustainable Employment), the Court Services & Offender Supervision Agency (CSOSA) and the Department of Corrections (DOC). The Department of Public Works welcomes the opportunity to help transition people into gainful employment, as well as provide opportunities for offenders to serve their community service hours.

And in response to a slew of requests heard at Mayor Williams’ Citizen Summits, our FY 03 budget requests an additional \$324,000 to double the number of litter cans we purchase from 500 to 1000 new cans. This will significantly decrease our backlog of requests for new cans.

Solid Waste Disposal Operations

The District's two municipal transfer stations load solid waste for ultimate disposal at a site outside the city, currently the Fairfax County Energy Resource Recovery Facility. As we have often discussed here, both the Benning Road and the Ft. Totten Transfer facilities need extensive equipment repair and building renovation to restore their useful capacity. Presently, they process approximately 200,000 tons of municipal waste per year, far less than their designed capacity. Capital budget authority has been approved for design and renovation at the Ft. Totten and Benning Rd. sites for FY02 and FY03. Construction should begin this Spring and be complete by the end of FY03.

This project is a leap forward for the city. By restoring capacity to these waste reduction facilities, it will be possible for the city to accept waste from private trash haulers for the first time in a decade, paving the way to the closure or phase-out of many of the private trash transfer stations operating in the District.

PARKING SERVICES DIVISION

Parking Enforcement

Our parking enforcement division is receiving a much-needed shot-in-the-arm this year. Thanks largely to the work of this Committee, DPW was authorized to hire 138 Parking Officers in FY 02, and we are well on our way to filling those important positions. In March, 22 new parking officers reported for training and we plan to hire, train and deploy an additional 20 every month. Of this number, 10% will be assigned to overnight duty as part of the ROSA (Registration of Out-

of-State Automobiles) program. In FY 03 we will provide the neighborhood parking enforcement that our residents have been asking for.

Booting and Towing

Immobilizing the vehicles of parking scofflaws – those with multiple, unpaid tickets – is the city’s primary method of collecting overdue parking fines. To release the vehicle, the owner is then required to pay all outstanding tickets. Due to the closing of the Brentwood Impoundment Lot and the relocation of the Booting Operation to 15th St., NE, there was a dip of 13% in the number of immobilizations in FY2001. However, this decline has been reversed in FY 2002 with the adoption of new technology and work process improvements. Mobile Data Terminals have been installed in booter vehicles, significantly increasing productivity. Additionally, two new boot crews will be added to our roster next month. We have every confidence that our booting operation will increase from approximately 75 immobilizations per day to 125 per day in the coming months. In FY 03, we will sustain this level of performance.

Currently, we are paying rent for our impoundment lot on Addison Road in Prince George’s County, Maryland. This short-term budget pressure should be relieved in FY2003 because the Office of Property Management is moving to purchase the impoundment lot as well as the buildings on the property. Our goal is to be able to site all of our towing, impoundment, storage and auction operations at that location.

Abandoned Auto Removal

For the past 11 years, the Abandoned and Junk Vehicle Division has been charged with monitoring and removing abandoned and derelict vehicles from city streets.

The Division is also responsible for the ultimate auction or disposal of these vehicles, whether they are burned-out hulks or late-model SUVs.

Last Fall, we inaugurated our new “Mission Control Room” in the Parking Services complex on West Virginia Ave., NE, to house abandoned and junk vehicle (AJV) investigators and their support team. The move dramatically reduced travel time and allowed investigators to spend more time on the street.

Coinciding with this move was the installation of WALES, the Washington Area Law Enforcement System, on most new PCs and a conversion from an outdated tracking system to the citywide service request processing system. The use of WALES in the office and the Police Department’s installation of Mobile WALES Terminals in investigator vehicles have allowed the AJVD to notify MPD as soon as a stolen vehicle is found.

We are also very excited to report that the first 16 of our 25 new tow cranes have arrived and are now in service. Another major improvement in our struggle to address the abandoned and junk vehicle problem has been the addition of a junk contractor that pays the city for each junk vehicle it removes from the Blue Plains Storage and Auction Facility.

And in FY 03, we are moving to become the city’s centralized towing operation, providing management oversight of the District’s towing operations. Our FY 03 budget request includes \$700,000 to provide funds for implementation and system maintenance.

FLEET MANAGEMENT ADMINISTRATION

The Fleet Management Administration buys and maintains DPW's vehicles as well as those for over 30 other District agencies. In late FY 01, we instituted a 16-hour, 6 days-per-week operation, enabling us to perform much of our preventive maintenance service during off-time hours when the vehicles are not in use. The FY03 budget proposal moves the fleet operation from the local budget to intra-district financing paid by its customers. We are confident that in FY 03, DPW will be able achieve our strategic goal of providing scheduled preventive maintenance for at least 80% of the equipment under Fleet's care.

We have also opened five state-of-the-art fuel sites, including the District's first 24/7 mega fueling station featuring automated gasoline and natural gas fuel, fluid dispensing, a car wash, and an electronic data reporting system to track maintenance records and costs per vehicle.

Finally in FY2002, \$7.8 million of new capital authority is allowing us to continue our vehicle/equipment replacement schedule through the Master Lease program.

INFORMATION AND TECHNOLOGY SERVICES

Twenty-four years ago, I could not have imagined the level of sophisticated technology that we have at our fingertips today. Who would have guessed back then that computers would change the way we plow snow or tow cars? I have learned that DPW's mission **requires** a robust and adaptable information technology environment. Our Office of Information and Technology Services (OITS) supports us with approximately 30 different computer applications, a

technical infrastructure that connects over 20 locations, and state-of-the-art telecommunication services. Whether DPW is maintaining the District's fleet of vehicles, determining the most cost effective route for trash pickup or providing rapid snow removal, technology provides the underlying, invisible vehicle that delivers these services to our residents.

Just as DPW has rebuilt its physical infrastructure and fleet, we are now rebuilding our technical infrastructure. We are working to enhance our long-range information systems plans to better integrate DPW's existing systems while building new applications to support our growing needs. Included with this year's budget is a technical adjustment that allows DPW to replenish our aging desktop computers within standard industry cycles.

Going forward in FY 03, we plan to leverage more advanced information technology to provide even greater service levels. Automatic Vehicle Locator technology may soon help us obtain time-motion information for more efficient route management and deployment of staff. We are also researching a Graphical Information System that will allow us to better monitor and respond to Abandoned and Junk Vehicle requests.

PUBLIC WORKS ACADEMY

DPW remains committed to investing in the career growth of all DPW personnel. Through the Public Works Academy, our goal is to ensure that each employee receives at least one training experience per year. We are especially focusing on building internal capacity in the areas of basic skills, customer service, occupational certifications, safety, and equipment operations. Last year, the Public

Works Academy offered 19 courses, creating 1,449 training experiences. In FY 03, every position in DPW, whether a sanitation worker or a senior manager, will have an annual training plan to ensure core competencies.

SNOW REMOVAL

In FY03, the Department of Transportation will assume responsibility of the snow budget. I realize, however, that DPW will remain an integral part of the District's snow removal effort. We have made significant investments in snow equipment, technology and training over the past two years. Although we have not yet finalized the details, Ms. Graham, Dan Tangherlini and I have discussed setting up an intra-District account that would allow DDOT to transfer funds to pay for the use of DPW personnel, equipment and expertise as needed.

CONCLUSION

DPW's proposed FY 2003 budget is our statement of intent – our contract with the residents of Washington, DC. On-time quality service delivery is becoming the standard by which we will demonstrate our accountability and our progress.

Good government creates results, conserving resources and protecting investments in people and equipment. Last year, we bought and planted our seeds and watched the sprouts come up. This year we are watering and mulching. Next year we can start looking for the flowers.

I want to take this opportunity to thank you, Madam Chair, for your ongoing support and that of the Committee on Public Works and the Environment. I am happy to answer any questions that I know you ave.